Trending: Amazon Web Services cuts hundreds of jobs in sales, training, and physical stores tech group (https://www.geekwire.com/2024/amazon-web-services-cuts-hundreds-of-jobs-in-sales-training-and-physical-stores-technology/)

Christmas delayed: Amazon offers $20 gift cards, refunds shipping charges after UPS and FedEx problems

BY TODD BISHOP (HTTPS://WWW.GEEKWIRE.COM/AUTHOR/TODD/) on December 26, 2013 at 6:15 am

In-depth Amazon coverage from the tech giant's hometown, including e-commerce, AWS, Amazon Prime, Alexa, logistics, devices, and more.

(https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=766057143408591&set=a.217043341643310.64852.154423787905266&type=1)Didn't get what you expected under the tree? It's probably marooned in a package delivery center.

Following widespread complaints about absent packages (http://www.cnn.com/2013/12/25/us/ups-delays/), Amazon says it is refunding shipping charges and offering $20 gift cards to customers whose gifts weren't delivered in time for Christmas Day.

UPS and FedEx are conceding (http://usnews.nbcnews.com/_news/2013/12/25/22047875-ups-fedex-draw-fire-after-christmas-delivery-problems?lite) that they were overwhelmed by last-minute orders and bad weather, causing unexpected delays in the delivery of some packages. The overall volume of online orders for the holidays appears to have exceeded expectations. That's a good trend for Amazon in the long run, but problematic in the short term.

Amazon says it is “reviewing the performance” of the delivery companies. Amazon “processed and tendered customer orders to delivery carriers on time for holiday delivery,” the company says in a statement (http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304753504579280194287430208).

Follow-up: How the Christmas shipping debacle will alter online retail (https://www.geekwire.com/2013/christmas-shipping-debacle-change-online-retailers-approach-holidays/)

UPS offered this explanation (http://www.ups.com/content/us/en/about/news/service_updates/20121224_delays.html) in a Christmas Day service update: “UPS understands the importance of your holiday shipments. UPS is experiencing heavy holiday volume and making every effort to get packages to their destination; however, the volume of air packages in our system exceeded the capacity of our network immediately preceding Christmas so some shipments were delayed. UPS is not making pickups or deliveries on Christmas Day and will resume normally scheduled service on December 26.”

The situation turned an otherwise innocuous Christmas message from UPS on Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=766057143408591&set=a.217043341643310.64852.154423787905266&type=1) into an open forum for customer complaints, with some UPS employees jumping in to defend the company. Wrote one, “I’m a driver, got off at 1010 last night, 60hr weeks, I’m tired, Mother Nature, a booming economy and no one visiting malls any more cause this.....no reason 4 anyone to be mad...Merry Christmas.”

A UPS spokeswoman told CNN (http://www.cnn.com/2013/12/25/us/ups-delays/) that the company decided not to ask drivers to work on Christmas, after giving it “much thought and consideration.” She explained, “They’ve pulled in extra hours. We did a lot of Sunday deliveries, which we normally don’t do. It wasn’t a decision that we came to lightly.”

Amazon has increasingly shown its willingness to take over elements of delivery, as evidenced by initiatives including Amazon Fresh and its “Prime Air” drone delivery plan (https://www.geekwire.com/2013/amazons-big-surprise-working-autonomous-flying-delivery-drones/). This incident is the type of thing that could push the company further into the delivery business, by creating a motivation to control more of the end-to-end customer experience.

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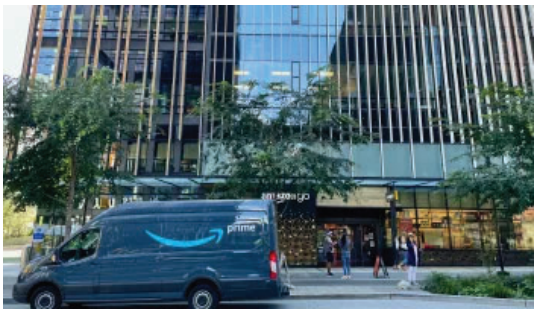

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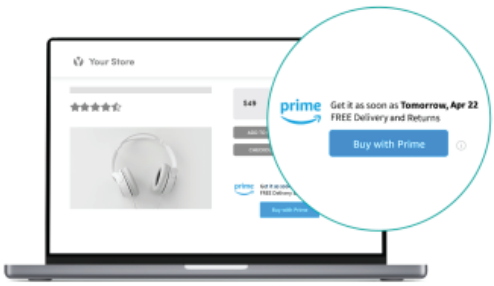

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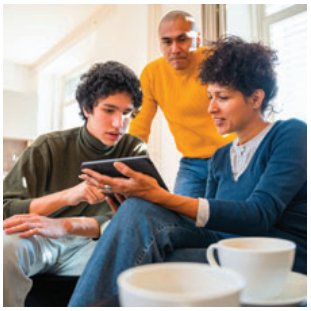

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